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ABSTRACT

This activity and answer book is designed for children who will be serving as witnesses in court cases. It uses three child characters. The book defines the role of each of the following: judge, prosecutor, victim's advocate, defense attorney, witness, court reporter, clerk of court, and jury. Also explained is the courthouse itself; a drawing of a courtroom shows where court officials, witnesses, etc. sit. Advice on what to do before coúrt is offered. Throughout the booklet an emphasis is placed on telling the truth. A set of rules of the courtroom and activities in the booklet make it clear that it is normal to be upset and nervous and emphasizes that children should let court officials know this when it happens. Children are also reminded that if they don't understand a question to say so and if they are asked about something they don't remember it is okay to say that they don't remember. Also explains what happens when the child's job as witness is over. Activities to reinforce material presented include: connect-the-dots, puzzles, and review questions. Includes a glossary of terms. (MKA)

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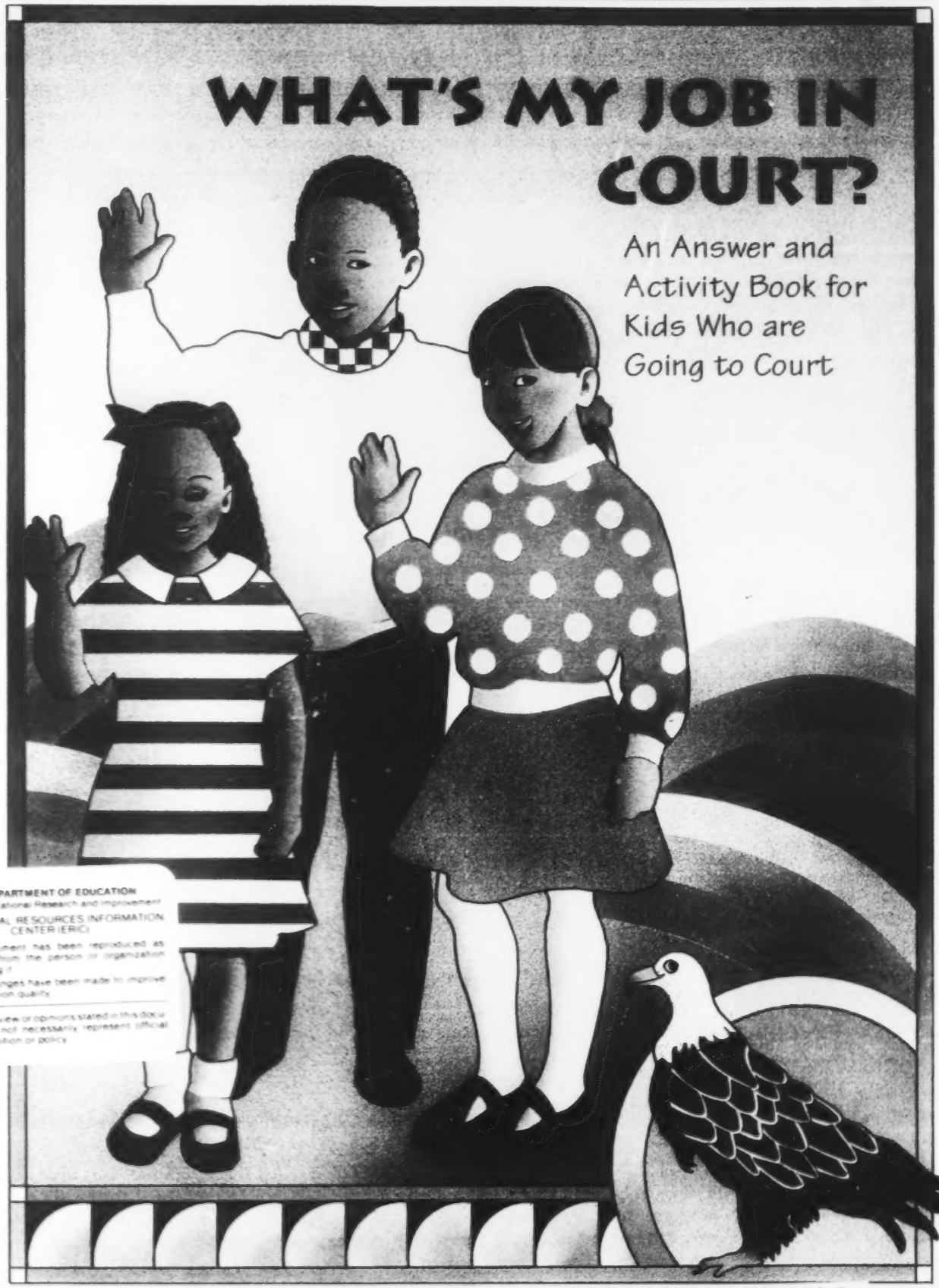
U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
District of Columbia

ED 430 169

WHAT'S MY JOB IN COURT?

An Answer and Activity Book for Kids Who are Going to Court



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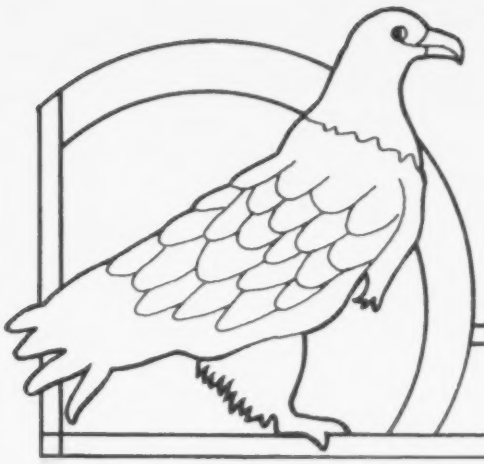

You may want to remember some names, dates and places. Here is a place to write them down.

My name is: _____

The prosecutor is: _____

Telephone number: _____

The police officer is: _____

Telephone number: _____

My court date is: _____

I met the prosecutor on: _____

My birthday is: _____

I am in grade: _____

The name of my school is: _____

My teacher's name is: _____

My favorite subject is: _____

My hobbies are: _____

_____

The people in my family are: _____

_____

_____

_____

Your prosecutor would like to know a little bit about you.

Can you show this page to him or her?

WHAT'S MY JOB IN COURT?

A Coloring and Activity Book
for Kids Going to Court.

Illustrated by Martha C. Vaughan

Published by

Victim Witness Assistance Unit
United States Attorney's Office
555 4th Street NW
Washington D.C. 20001
(202) 514-7364

and

D.C. Children's Advocacy Center
400 E Street NW
Washington D.C. 20001
(202) 638-2575

WHAT'S MY JOB IN COURT?

An Answer and Activity Book for Kids Who are Going to Court

Victim Witness Assistance Unit, United States Attorney's Office and the D.C. Children's Advocacy Center

What's in this Book?

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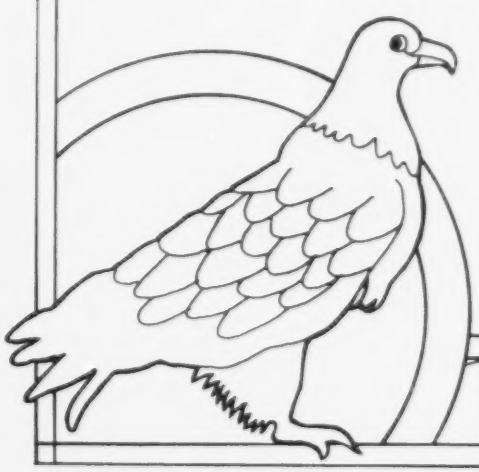
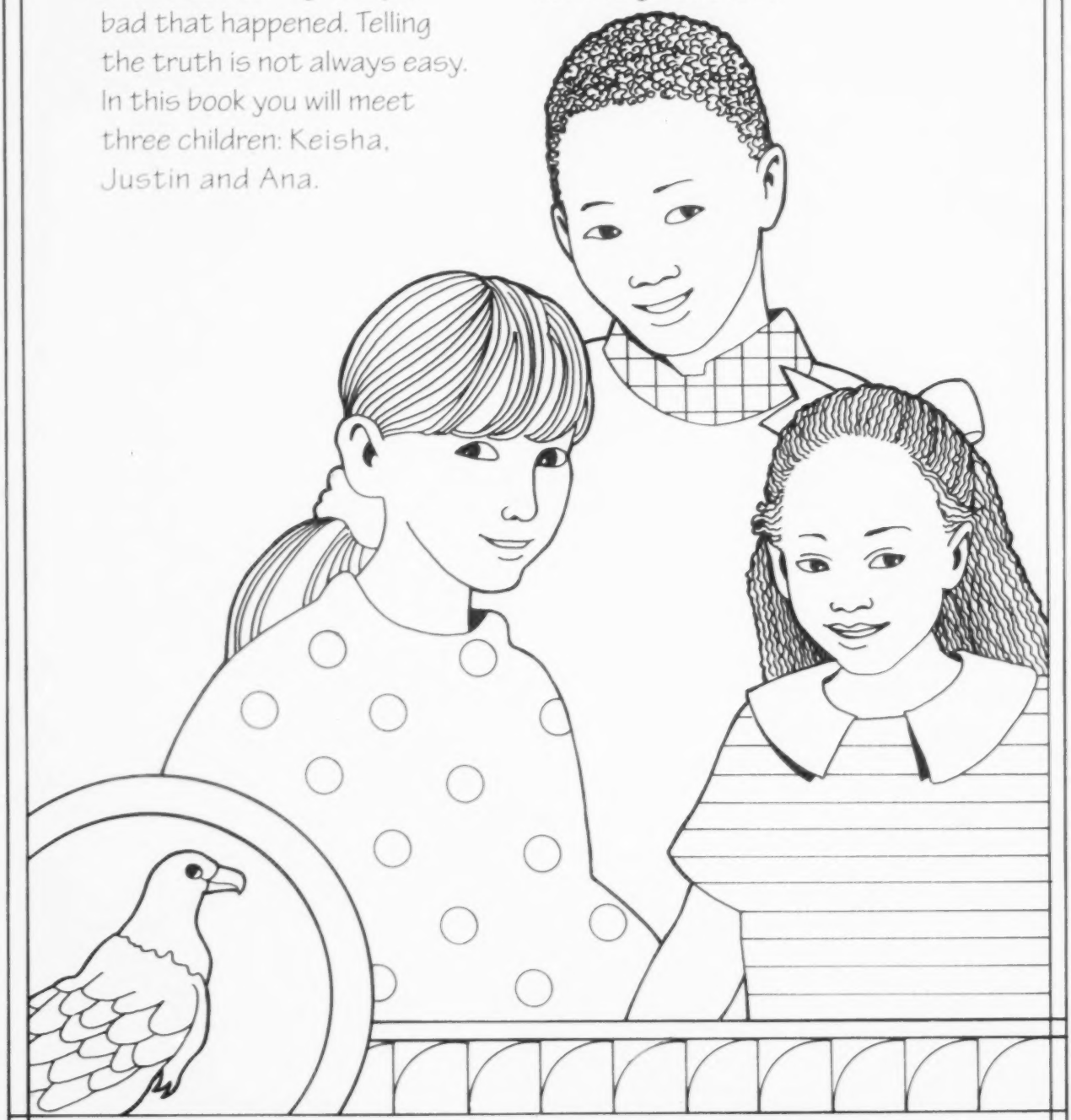


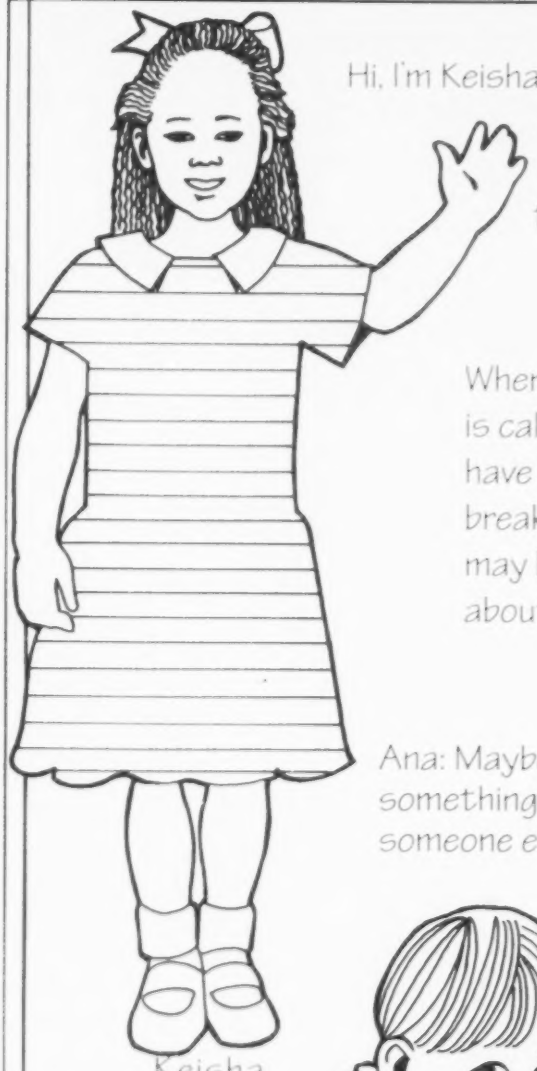
INTRODUCTION

This book is for children like you who may have to go to court. When you go to court you will have to tell the truth about something scary or bad that happened. Telling the truth is not always easy. In this book you will meet three children: Keisha, Justin and Ana.

They are going to teach you about new friends, new places and some new words so that you will be ready when it is your turn to go to court.

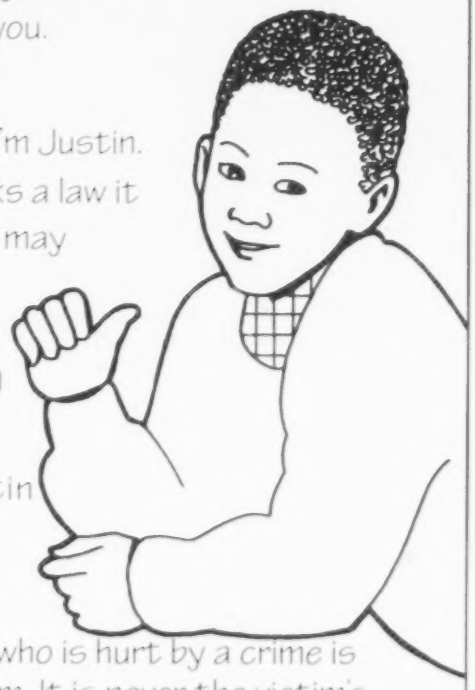


LEGAL EAGLES



Hi, I'm Keisha. My friends Justin and Ana and I have an important job to do. Just like you.

Keisha

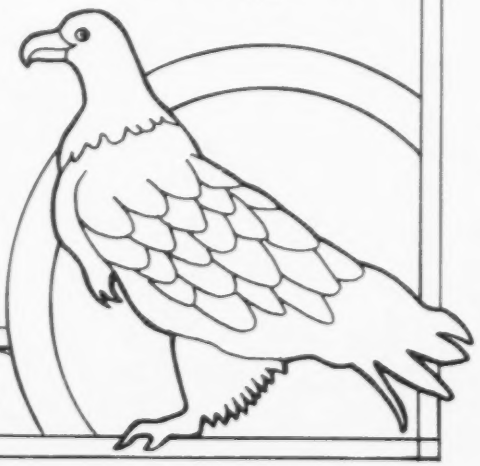


I'm Justin. When someone breaks a law it is called a crime. You may have seen someone break the law or you may know something about it.

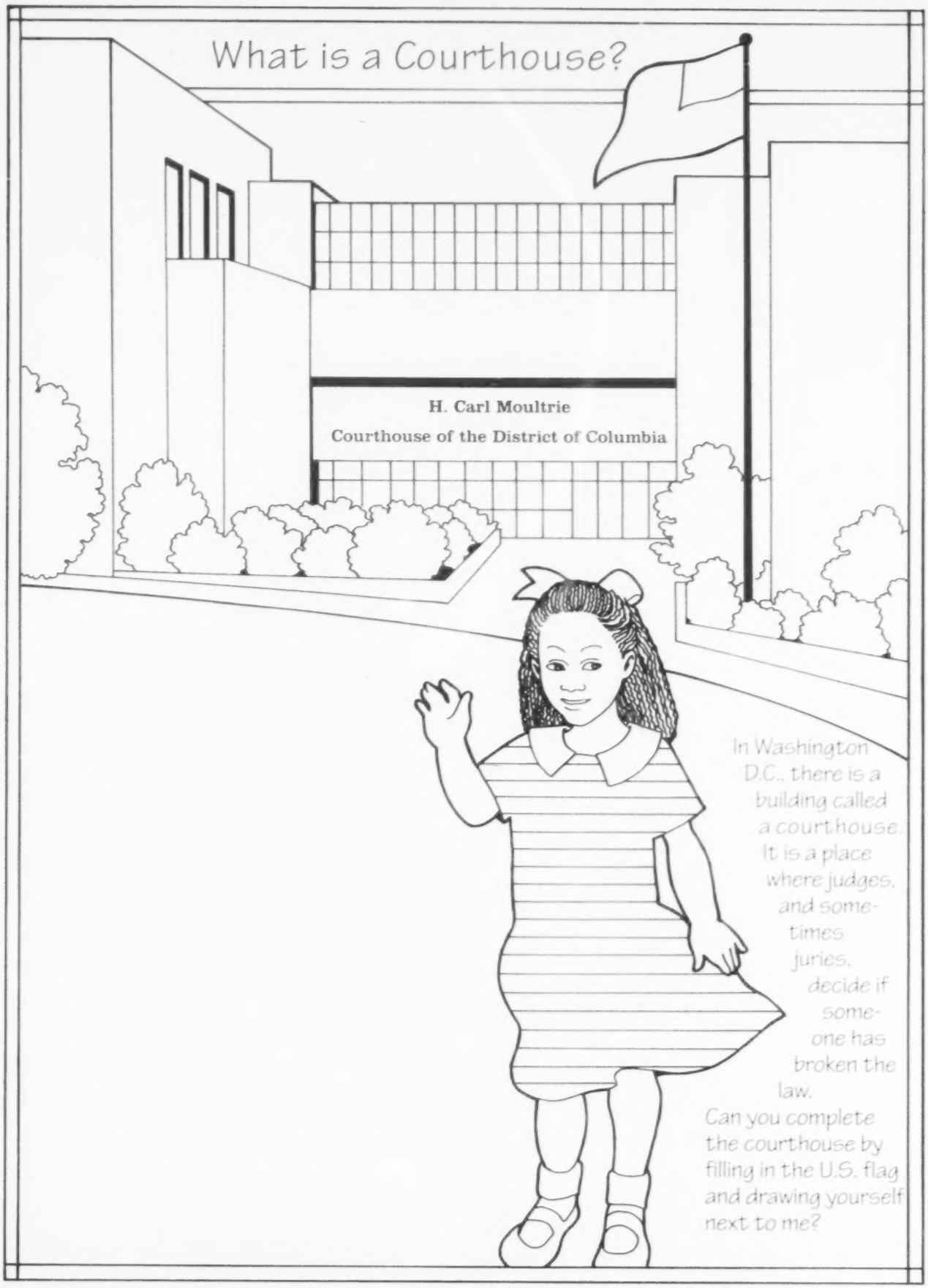
Justin

Ana: Maybe someone did something to hurt you or someone else. The person who is hurt by a crime is called a victim. It is never the victim's fault when someone else hurts them. If someone hurt you, then you are a victim. Witnesses are people who see crimes happen. If you saw someone else get hurt you are a witness. If you have to go to court and tell what happened to you, then you are a witness, too.

Ana

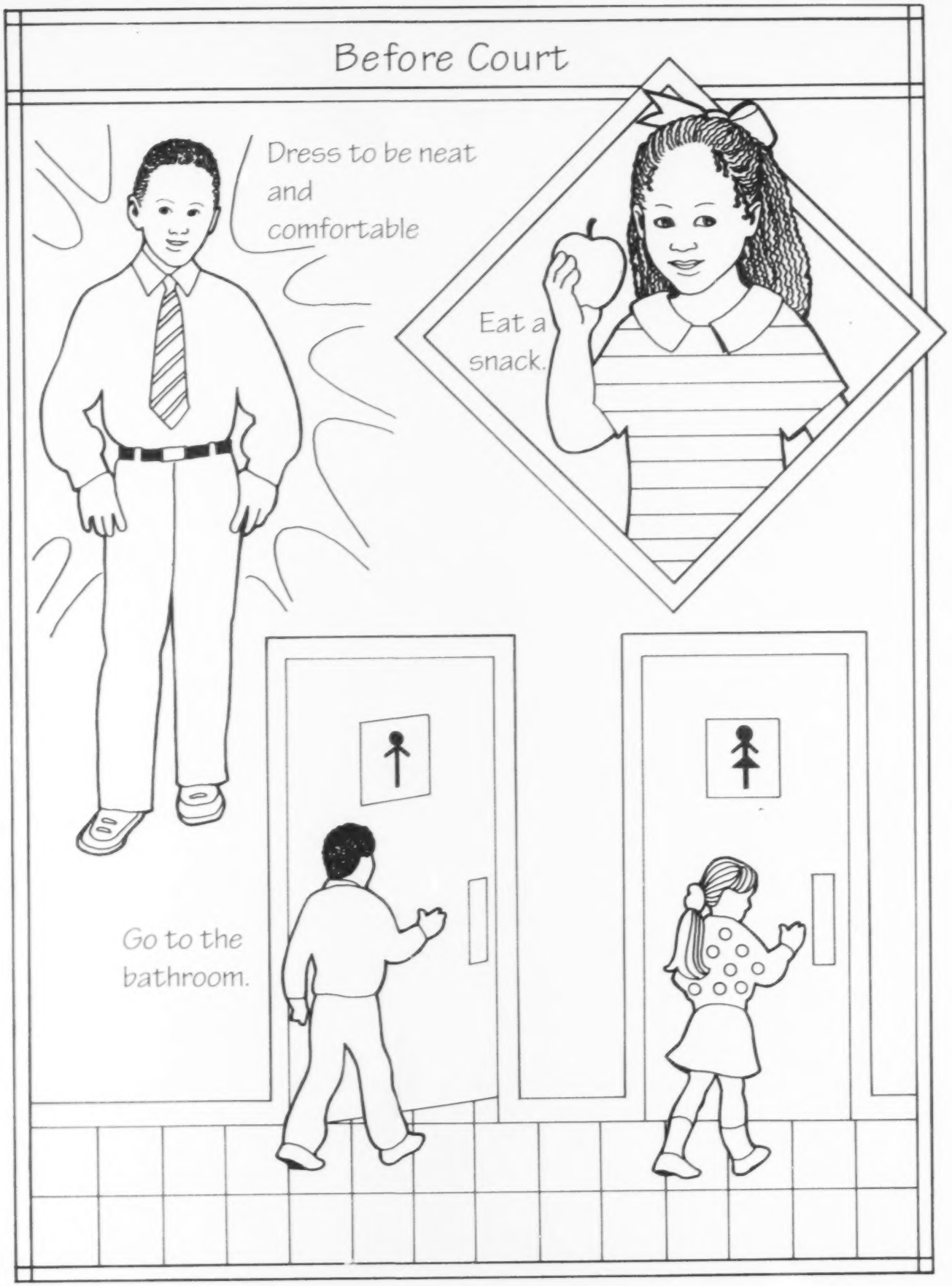


What is a Courthouse?

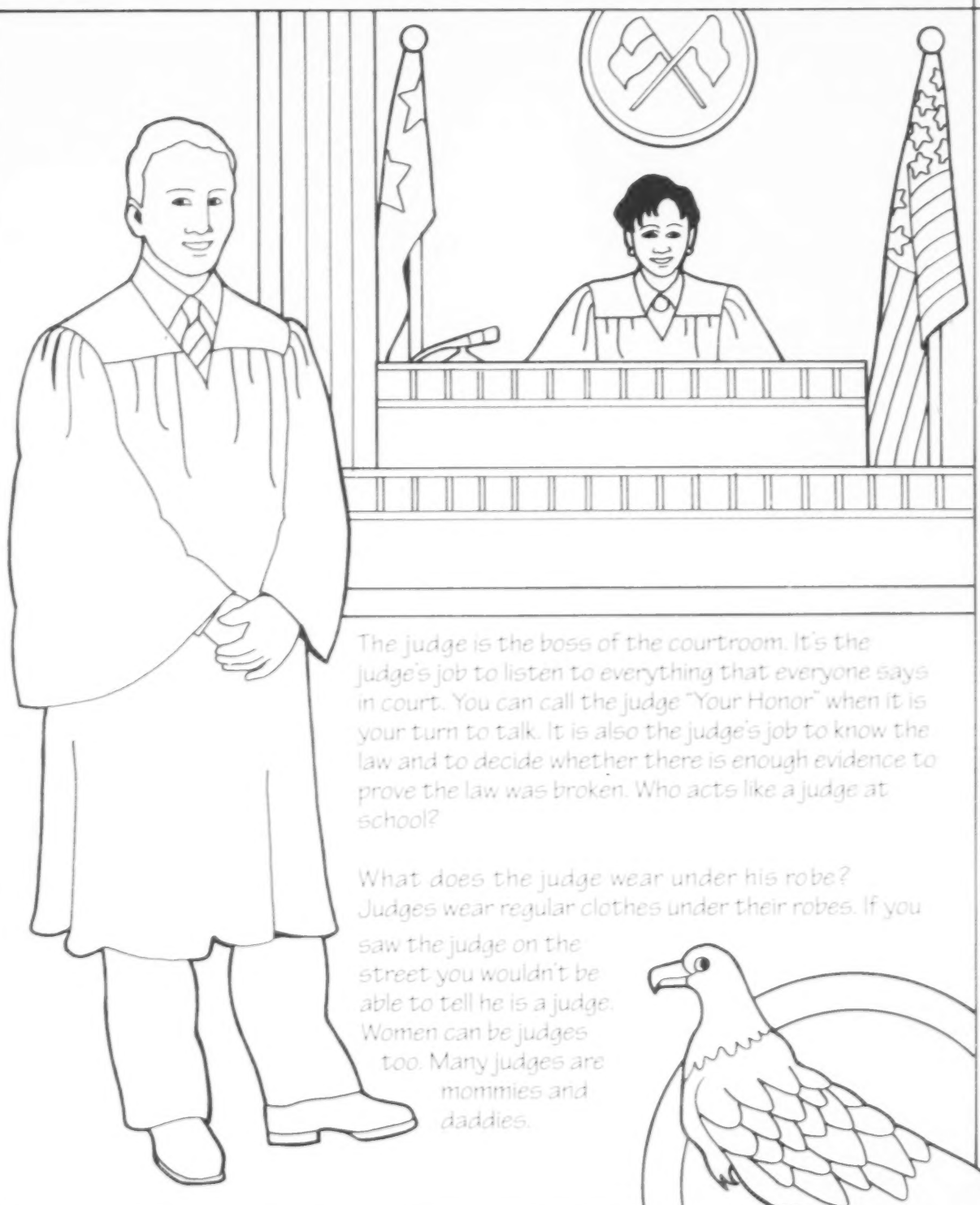


In Washington D.C., there is a building called a courthouse. It is a place where judges, and sometimes juries, decide if someone has broken the law.

Can you complete the courthouse by filling in the U.S. flag and drawing yourself next to me?

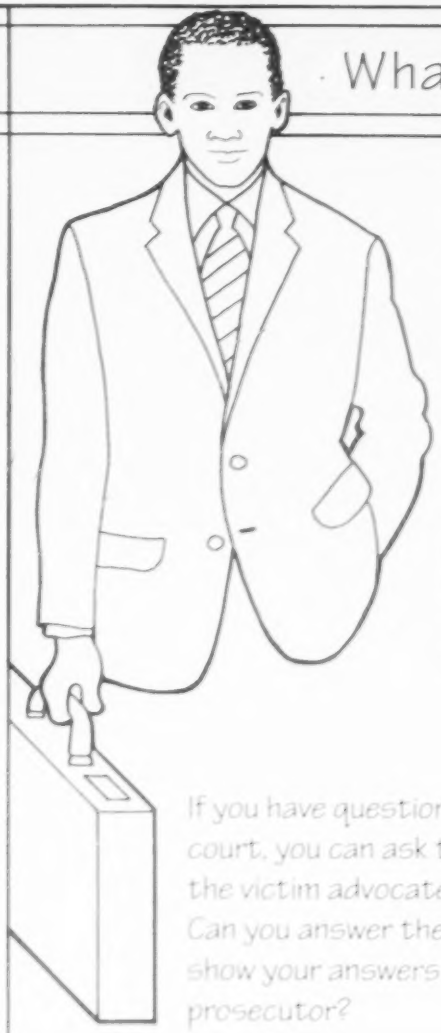

Before Court
Dress to be neat and comfortable
Eat a snack.
Go to the bathroom.

What is the judge's job?



The judge is the boss of the courtroom. It's the judge's job to listen to everything that everyone says in court. You can call the judge "Your Honor" when it is your turn to talk. It is also the judge's job to know the law and to decide whether there is enough evidence to prove the law was broken. Who acts like a judge at school?

What does the judge wear under his robe? Judges wear regular clothes under their robes. If you saw the judge on the street you wouldn't be able to tell he is a judge. Women can be judges too. Many judges are mommies and daddies.



What does the prosecutor do?

The prosecutor is called the Assistant United States Attorney. The prosecutor helps you do your job as a witness. The prosecutor does this by asking you questions so the judge and jury can listen to the answers.

At the beginning, the prosecutor may ask you some questions like these:

How old are you?
What grade are you in?
What does it mean when you "promise to tell the truth?"
What do you think might happen if people do not tell the truth in court?

If you have questions about going to court, you can ask the prosecutor or the victim advocate for help.
Can you answer these questions and show your answers to the prosecutor?

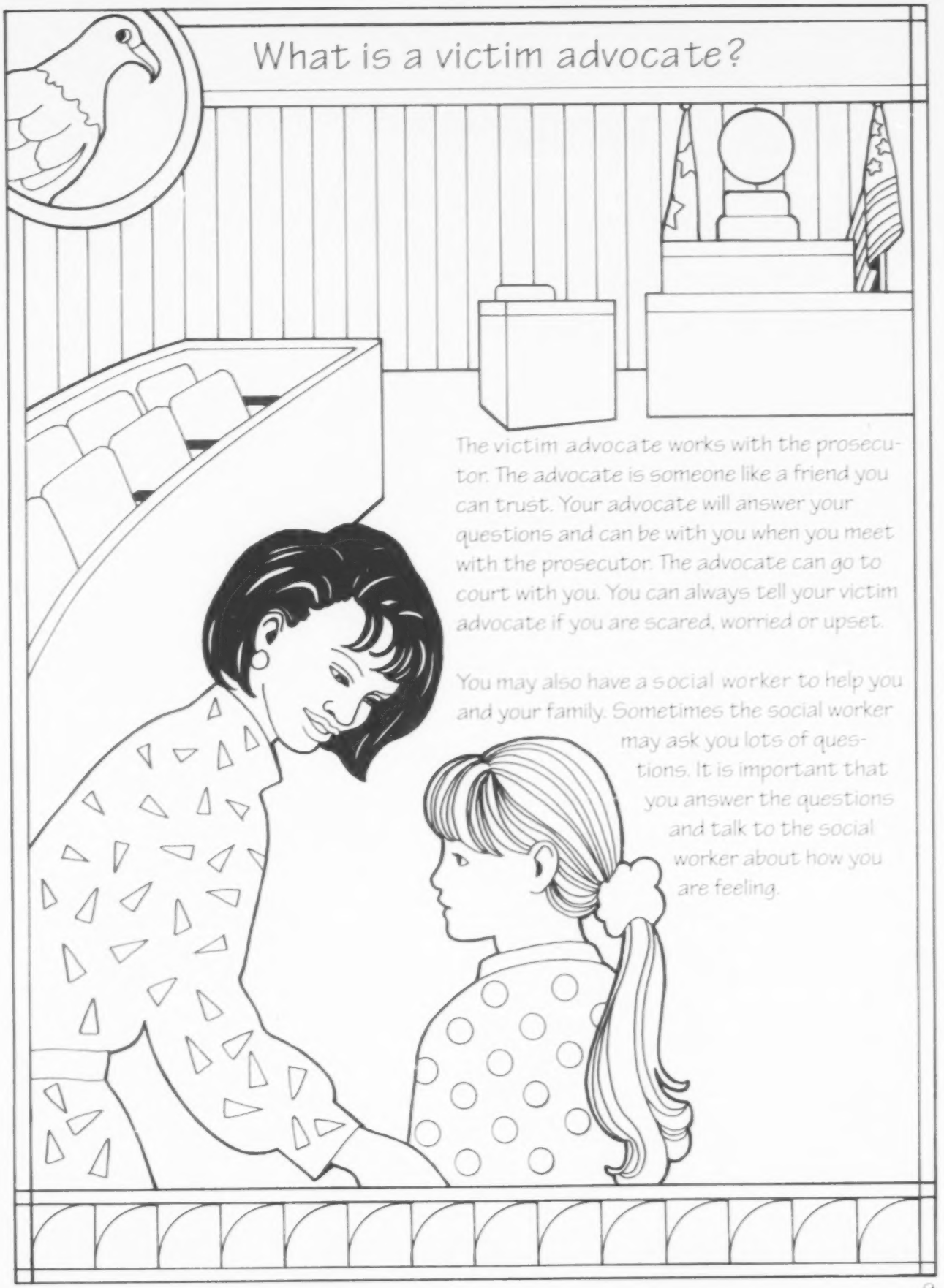
Do you think it will be hard to talk to the prosecutor about what happened? _____
Why? _____
_____
_____

What questions do you want to ask the prosecutor? _____
_____
_____

Do you know someone who would like to come to court with you? Who? _____
Is there anything about going to court that scares you? _____
_____

Draw a picture of your prosecutor

What is a victim advocate?



The victim advocate works with the prosecutor. The advocate is someone like a friend you can trust. Your advocate will answer your questions and can be with you when you meet with the prosecutor. The advocate can go to court with you. You can always tell your victim advocate if you are scared, worried or upset.

You may also have a social worker to help you and your family. Sometimes the social worker may ask you lots of questions. It is important that you answer the questions and talk to the social worker about how you are feeling.

Other things to know about going to court

If someone asks a question and you don't know the answer, it is OK to say, "I don't know the answer to your question."

If someone asks you a question and you don't understand what they are talking about, simply say, "I don't understand the question."

If someone asks you a question about something you can't remember, it is OK to say, "I don't remember."

If someone asks you to talk about something that makes you feel uncomfortable or embarrassed, simply take a deep breath and remember that your job in court is to tell what happened to you. The judge is there to help you. The judge and jury need to know everything about what happened to you. Many witnesses have to talk about things that make them feel uncomfortable or sad--even adults.

It is OK to cry in court. If you start to cry, you can ask the judge if you can stop talking and take a short break.

If you need to go to the bathroom, all you have to do is ask the judge or the prosecutor if you can take a short break to go to the bathroom. Even judges have to go to the bathroom sometimes!

What is the defense attorney's job?

The person who may have hurt someone is called the defendant. The defendant's lawyer is called the defense attorney.

Can you give an example of breaking the law?

_____

_____

The defense attorney gets to ask you questions after the prosecutor has finished asking you questions.

Sometimes when you are talking in court, the defense attorney or prosecutor may stand up and interrupt you to talk to the judge. Don't worry. You haven't done anything wrong. No one is angry at you. All you have to do is stop talking until the judge tells you to finish answering the question.

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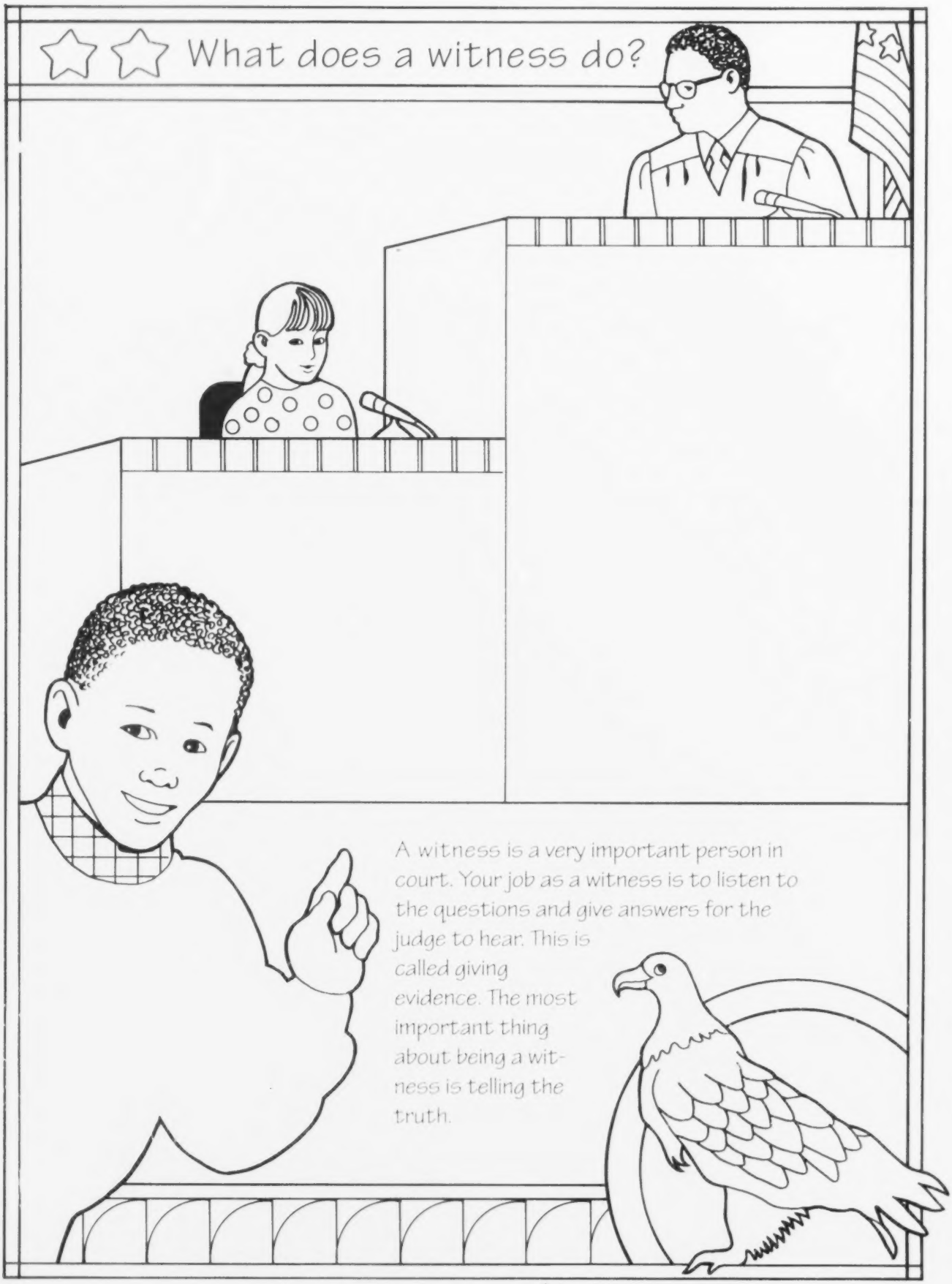

What does a witness do?
A witness is a very important person in court. Your job as a witness is to listen to the questions and give answers for the judge to hear. This is called giving evidence. The most important thing about being a witness is telling the truth.

WHAT IF . . .

You are asked a question and you don't understand it?

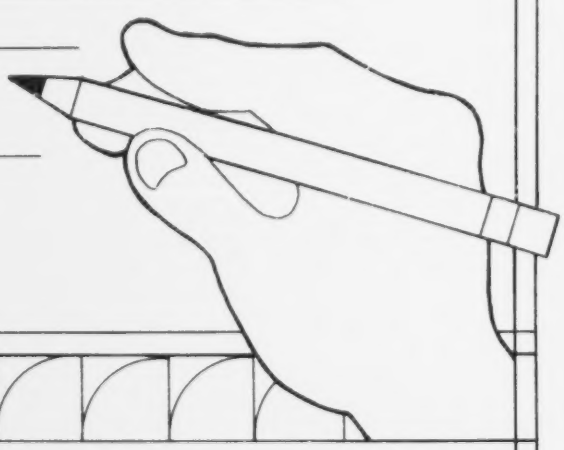
You are asked a question and you can't remember the answer?

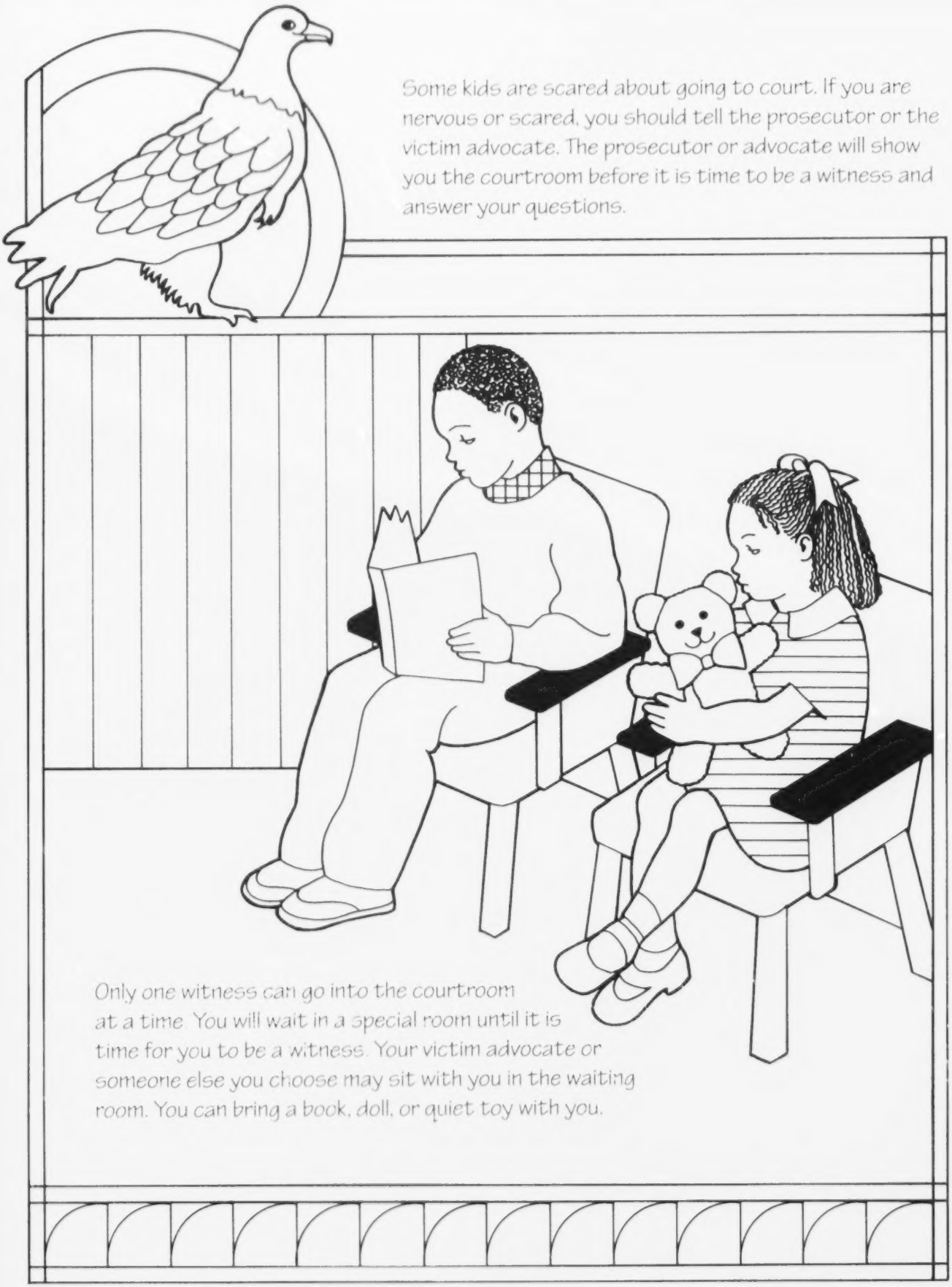
You are asked an embarrassing question?

You cry in court?

You need to go to the bathroom?

You are asked more than one question at a time?

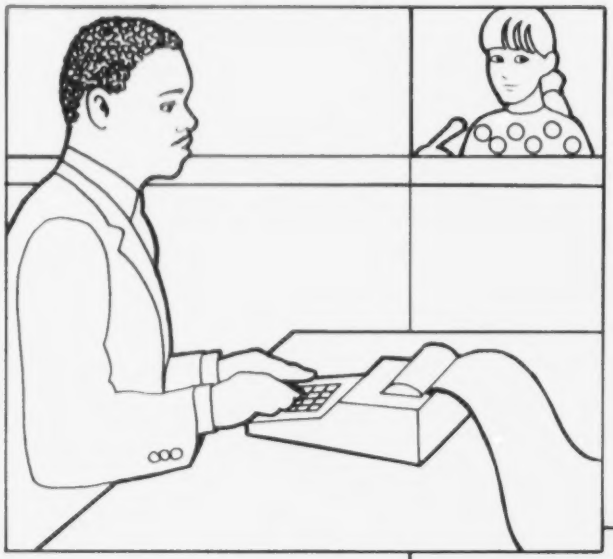




Some kids are scared about going to court. If you are nervous or scared, you should tell the prosecutor or the victim advocate. The prosecutor or advocate will show you the courtroom before it is time to be a witness and answer your questions.

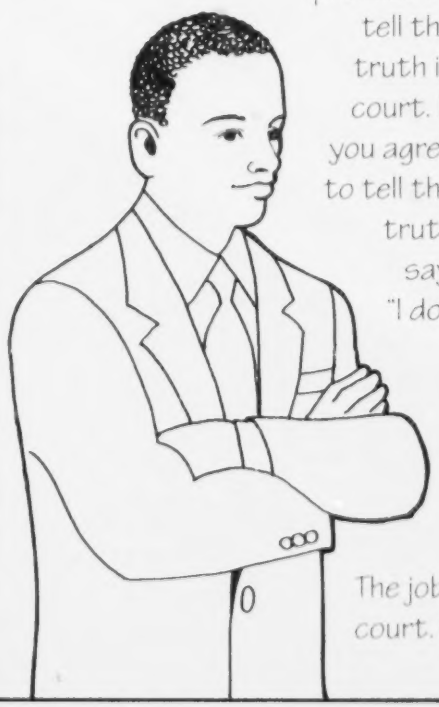
Only one witness can go into the courtroom at a time. You will wait in a special room until it is time for you to be a witness. Your victim advocate or someone else you choose may sit with you in the waiting room. You can bring a book, doll, or quiet toy with you.

Who are those other people in court?



The court reporter's job is to write down everything that everyone says in court. The reporter uses a special typing machine. You can make the court reporter's job easier if you speak loudly and slowly. It's OK to take your time. If you mean yes or no, you should always say the words and not just shake your head.

The courtroom clerk's job is to help the judge. When the judge comes in, the clerk says, "All rise." That means everybody stands up. The clerk will ask you to raise your right hand and promise to tell the truth in court. If you agree to tell the truth say, "I do."

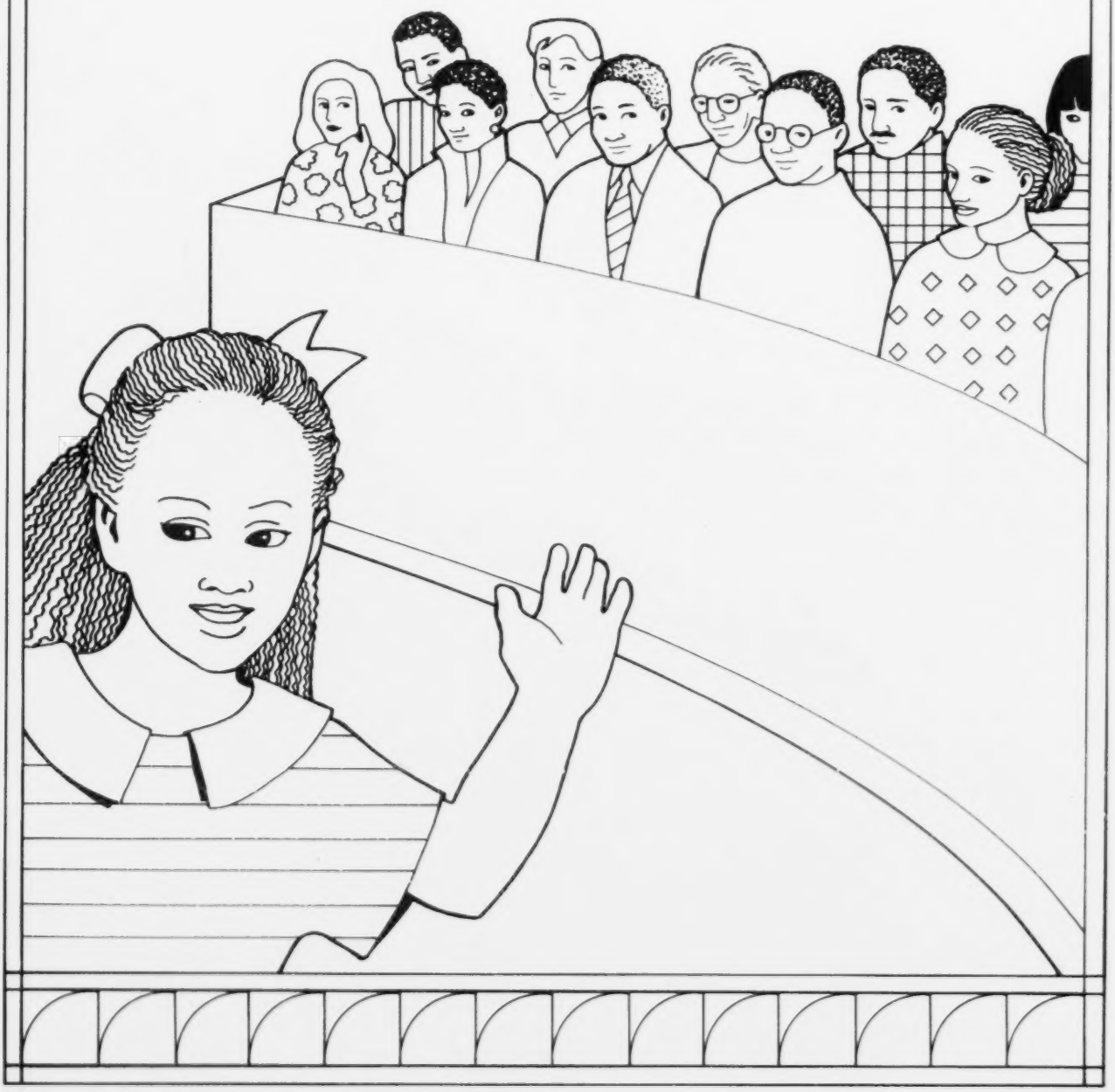


The job of the U.S. Marshal is to keep everyone safe in court. Can you color the U. S. Marshal?

All About the Jury

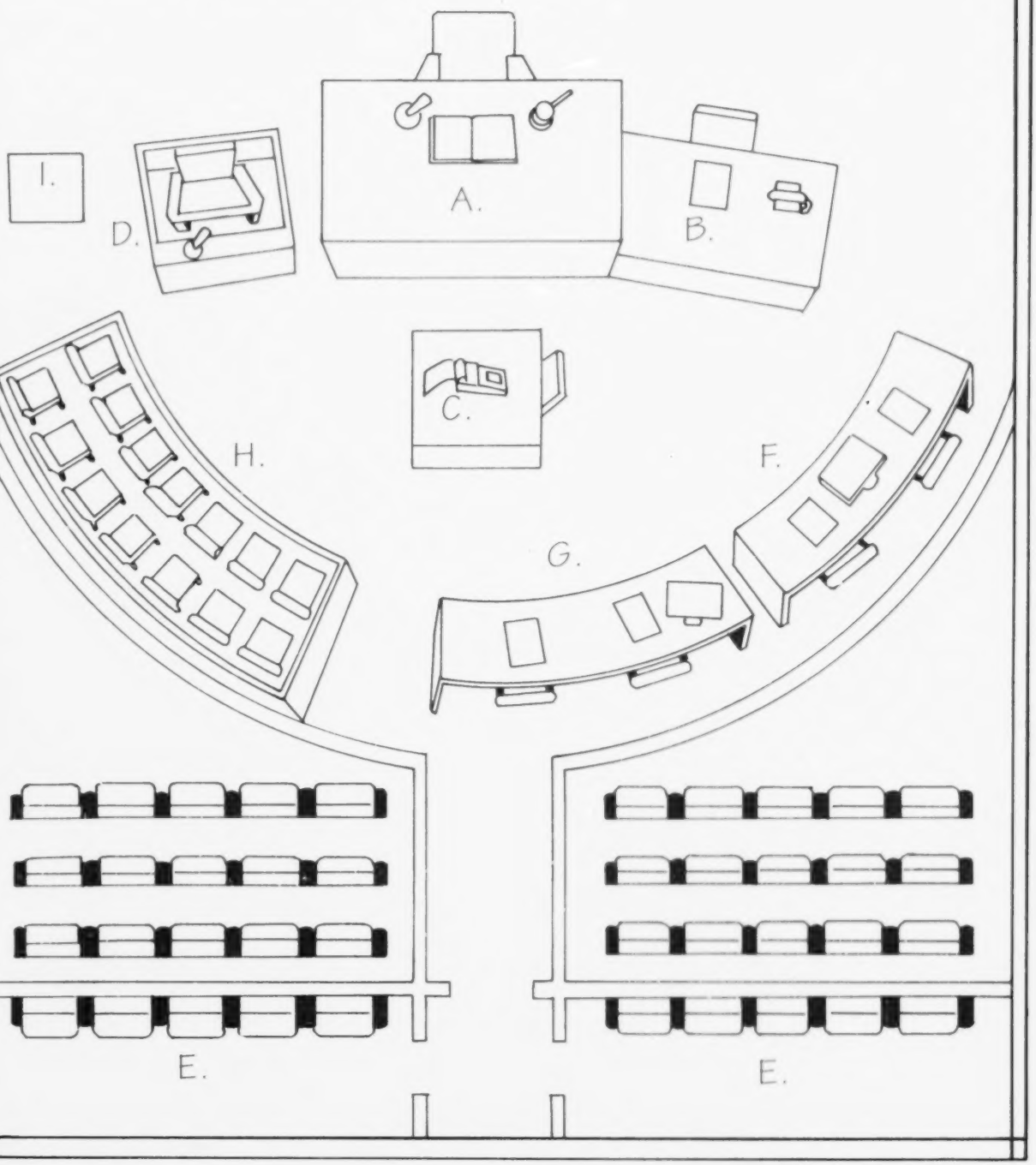
Sometimes there will be a jury in the courtroom. A jury is made up of a group of people who live in Washington, DC. The people on the jury are called jurors, and they are picked by the prosecutor and the defense attorney.

The jury's job is to listen carefully to all the witnesses and to decide together if the defendant broke the law. When there is no jury in the courtroom, it is the judge's job to decide whether someone broke the law.



Where does everyone sit?

A. Judge
B. Courtroom Clerk
C. Court Reporter
D. Witness
E. Witness Waiting Rooms
F. Defense Attorney
G. Prosecutor
H. Jury (if there is one)
I. U.S. Marshal



Rules of the Courtroom

In America everybody tries to be very careful and fair when deciding whether people have broken the law or not. That is because if people are found guilty of breaking the law, they can be punished. It is not enough that the judge or jury thinks the defendant probably broke the law. The law says that the jury or judge cannot find a person guilty unless they feel certain that the person broke the law.

Rules for witnesses:

Tell the truth.

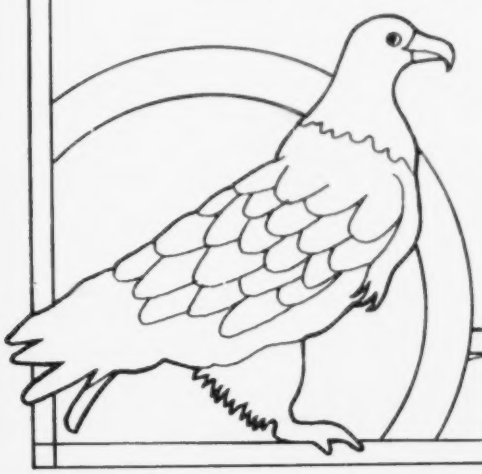
If you can't remember something or don't understand what someone says, say so.

If you don't know the answer to a question, say you don't know. Don't guess.

If you don't understand the question, tell them that you don't understand.

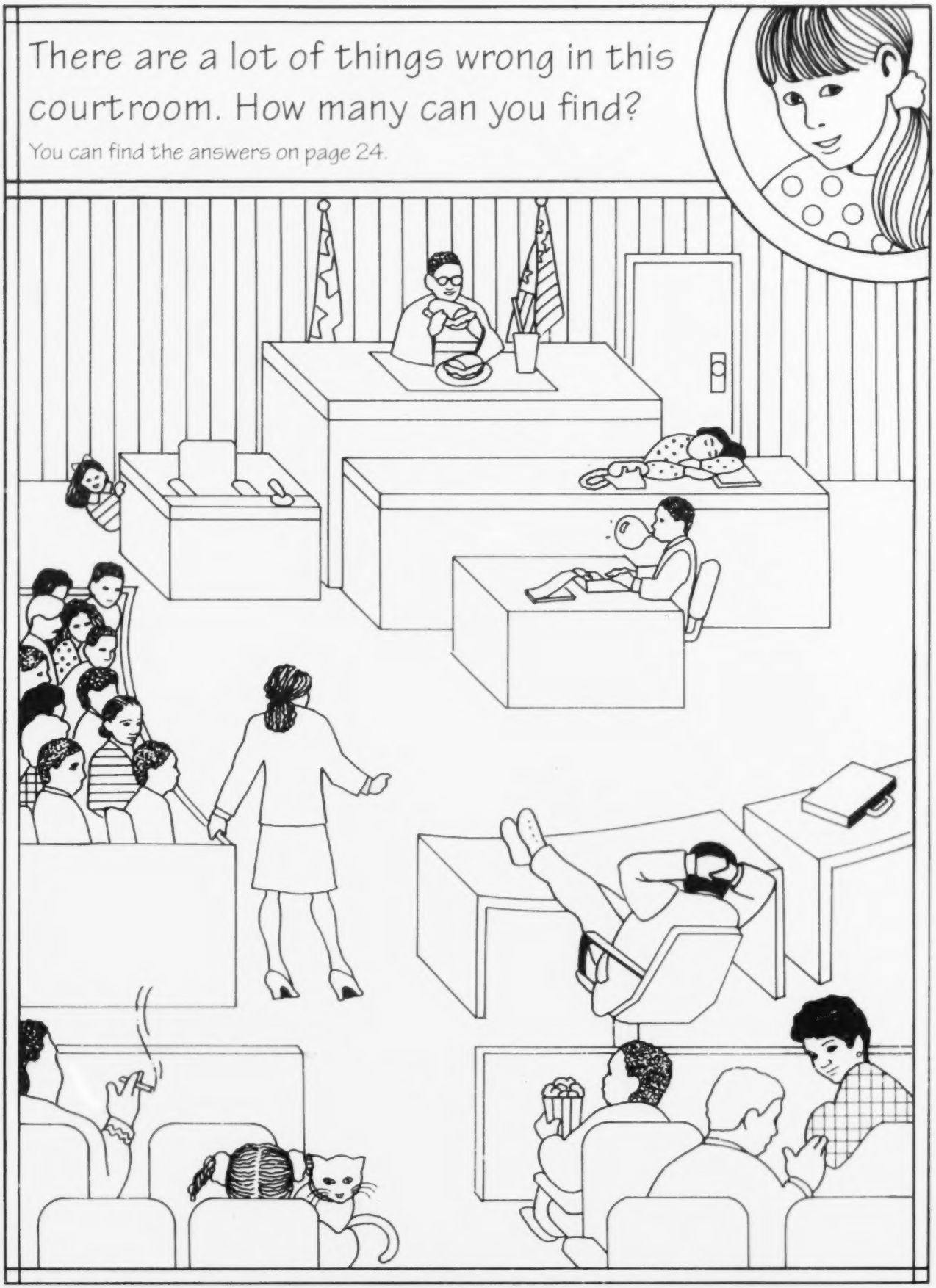
If you are sure about the answer to a question, you can say so. If you are not sure, you can tell the judge and jury what parts you are not sure of.

Talk to the judge if something is bothering you or if you have a question while you are being a witness.



There are a lot of things wrong in this courtroom. How many can you find?

You can find the answers on page 24.



What happens when my job is over?

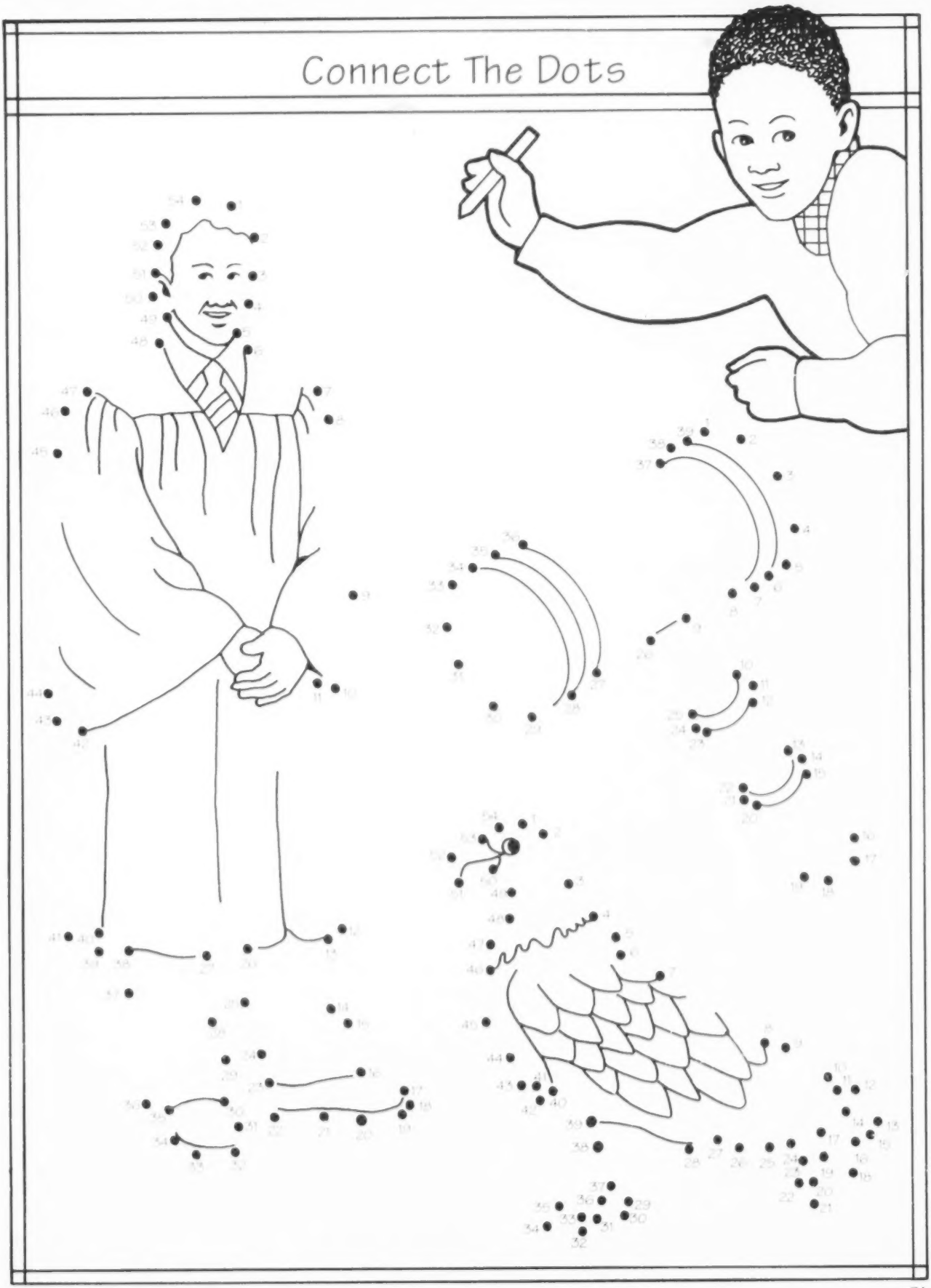
✡ If the judge or jury finds the defendant not guilty of breaking the law, the defendant is free to go. If the defendant is found guilty, one of the things the judge must decide is how to keep the defendant from breaking the law again. To do this, sometimes the judge sets rules about what the defendant can and cannot do. Sometimes the judge makes the defendant pay money. Sometimes the judge sends the defendant to jail. Sometimes the judge makes the defendant get special help.

✡ Before the judge decides what to do with the defendant, you will get to make a victim impact statement. This is your chance to tell the judge how you felt about the crime and to say what you would like the judge to do. You can write the judge a letter or draw pictures. Your victim advocate can help you.

✡ If the jury finds the defendant not guilty, it doesn't mean you did a bad job telling the truth. If you have any questions about what the jury decides in the case, you can ask the prosecutor or victim advocate. After court is all over, some kids feel sad or upset. You should talk to someone about how you feel.

✡ Whatever happens, you have done an important job by being a witness. Going to court and telling the truth will help you and maybe other children be safe. You may still remember some bad things about what happened but now you have some new friends to help you. You are very brave. Thank you for being willing to tell the truth in court.

Connect The Dots



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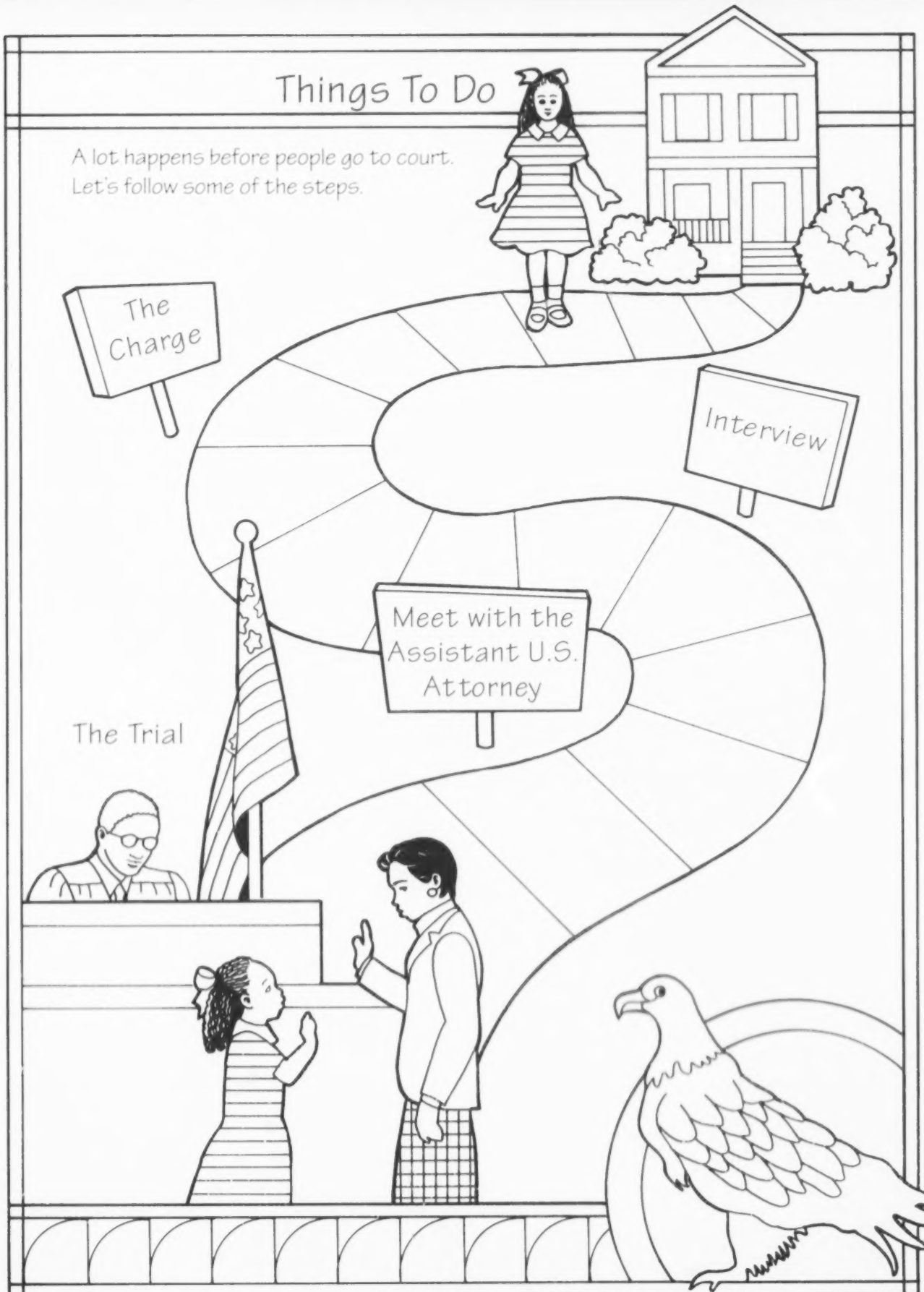

Things To Do
A lot happens before people go to court.
Let's follow some of the steps.
The Charge
Interview
Meet with the Assistant U.S. Attorney
The Trial

What does that mean?

Allegation: Something that someone says happened.

Charge: The law that the police believe the defendant has broken.

Complaint: A statement to the police accusing someone of breaking the law.

Continuance: Put off trial until another time.

Cross-examine: Questioning of a witness by the attorney for the other side.

Evidence: Things that witnesses say in court and things (such as photographs, clothes or drawings) that are brought to court to show what happened.

Interview: A meeting with the police or prosecutor.

Juror: A person who is on the jury.

Oath: A promise to tell the truth.

Objection: A reason that an attorney interrupts a witness to talk to the judge.

Plea: The answer the defendant gives (guilty or not guilty) to the charge.

Preliminary Hearing: A hearing where the judge decides whether there is enough evidence to make the defendant have a trial.

Sentence: The punishment the judge gives to someone found guilty of breaking the law.

Sequestration: A rule that says witnesses cannot talk to other witnesses or hear what other people say.

Statement: A description that a witness gives to the police and that the police write down.

Subpoena: A piece of paper delivered by a detective that tells a witness when and where to come to court.

Testify: Answer questions in court.

Testimony: What a witness says in court.

Transcript: A typewritten record that is made by the court reporter of what is said in court.

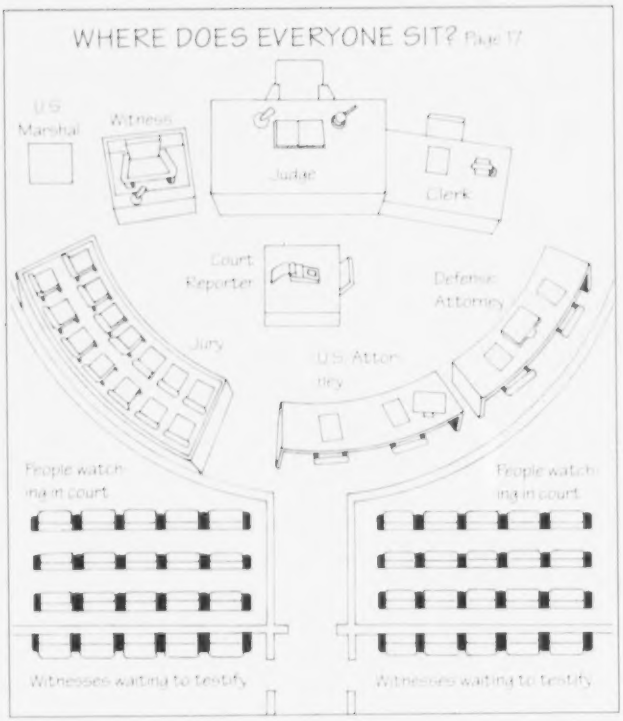
Trial: A hearing that takes place when the defendant pleads "not guilty" and witnesses are required to come to court to give evidence.

Answers

WHAT IF . . . Page 13

1. If you don't understand what people are asking, say, "I don't understand." If they repeat it and you still don't know what they mean, ask them to say it in a different way or an easier way.
2. You might be asked about things that you don't remember or about things that didn't happen. If you don't remember, say, "I don't remember. Don't guess. If you know something never happened, say so. If you forget the order in which things happened, it is okay. The most important thing is to tell the truth.
3. You might be asked to talk about things that are embarrassing. That's hard to do. Remember that judges and attorneys and everyone in court have heard people talk about embarrassing things a lot of times. You can tell the judge you're embarrassed, but you should tell the judge what happened even if it is embarrassing.
4. Lots of people cry in court. It is okay. If you think you might cry in court, tell the prosecutor. The prosecutor can make sure there are tissues. Tell the prosecutor what you want to happen if you cry: do you want a break or do you want to keep on going?
5. It is always a good idea to go to the bathroom just before you go into court to be a witness. If you need to go to the bathroom while you're giving evidence, tell the judge you need a break. If you're nervous about doing this, talk to the prosecutor before court about what you should do. You might agree to raise your hand so that the prosecutor can tell the judge you need a break.
6. It is easy to get mixed up or to mix up people who are listening to you if you are asked too many questions at a time. You might tell the attorney who is asking you questions to ask you only one thing at a time so you can answer properly.

WHERE DOES EVERYONE SIT? Page 17



WHAT IS WRONG IN THIS COURTROOM? Page 19

1. The judge is eating a sandwich. You should not eat in court but it is a good idea to bring a snack with you while you wait.
2. The witness is playing hide and seek in court.
3. The clerk of the court is sleeping. She should be listening to what is happening in court and ready to help the judge.
4. The court reporter is blowing bubble gum. Don't chew gum in court!
5. There is a kitten in the courtroom. Pets are not allowed in the court, but if you would like to bring a special toy to hold while you are waiting, that's fine. If there is someone you want to come into the courtroom with you, ask the prosecutor.
6. The prosecutor has his feet up on the desk. Everyone should try to sit up straight in court.
7. People sitting in the seats are talking. They should try not to talk while the judge is in court. If they have to say something, they should whisper or leave quietly and talk outside.
8. Someone is eating popcorn. This not a movie. Going to court is serious. No one should eat while in the courtroom, even if that person is just watching.
9. Someone is smoking. Smoking is not allowed in the courtroom or in the courthouse.

CONNECT THE DOTS Page 21

D.C. Children's Advocacy Center

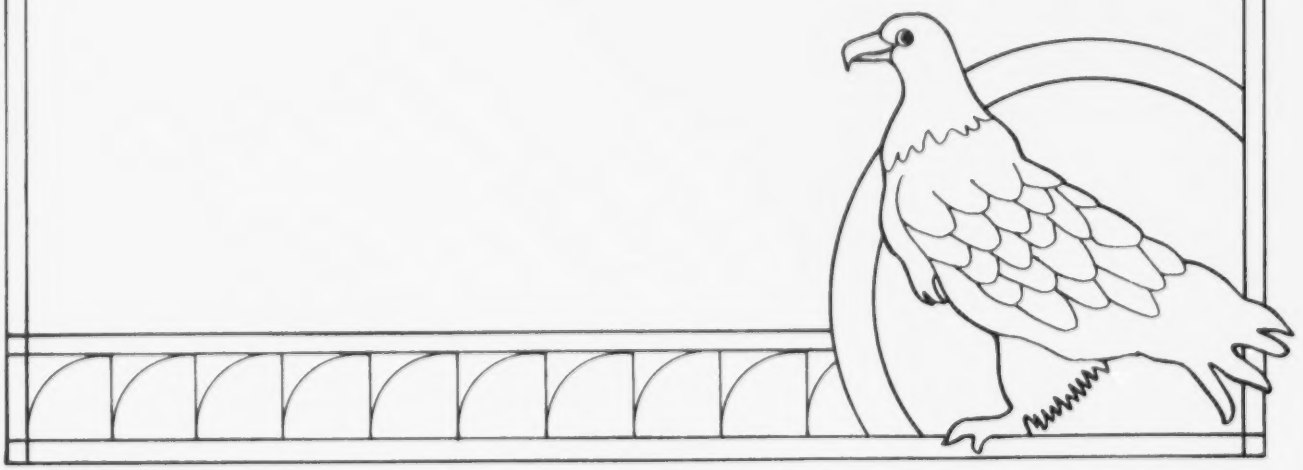
300 E Street NW
Washington D.C. 20001
(202) 638-2575
Kimberly Shellman, Executive Director

The Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) is a non-profit organization created to provide a warm and welcoming place for abused children to be interviewed. The CAC works closely with police officers, prosecutors, victim advocates, and social workers to help coordinate a child-friendly approach to the investigation and prosecution of civil and criminal child abuse cases in the District of Columbia.

Victim Witness Assistance Unit

United States Attorney's Office
555 4th Street NW
Washington D.C. 20001
(202) 514-7130
Kathryn Turman, Chief

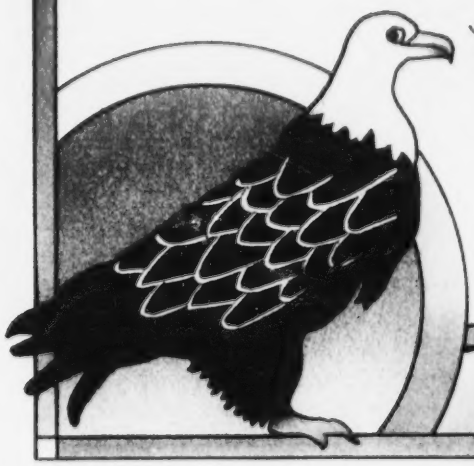
The Victim Witness Assistance Unit provides help to victims and witnesses of crime while they are involved with the criminal justice system. The VWAU provides crisis intervention services, referrals for social and mental health services, information about the criminal justice process and case status, and court accompaniment. Special services are available for child victims, the elderly, and victims with disabilities.



What is Kid's Court?

Kid's Court is a fun program for kids who may have to go to court. It takes place in the afternoon after school. Kids who participate in Kid's Court visit a real courtroom and get a chance to participate in a "pretend" trial with other kids.

Kid's Court helps kids feel more comfortable about going to court. Sometimes called "court school," Kid's Court is operated by the D.C. Children's Advocacy Center and the Victim Witness Assistance Unit of the U. S. Attorney's Office.



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